

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 INR-07 L-03 ACDA-07
NSAE-00 PA-01 SS-15 PRS-01 SP-02 USIA-06 TRSE-00
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AMEMBASSY PARIS
USMISSION NATO
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GE
USNMR SHAPE BE
CINCLANT NORFOLK VA
SECDEF WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L OSLO 1686

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: OVIP, EAID, MASS, PO, NO
SUBJECT: BUTTER AND GUNS: PORTUGUESE PRIME MINISTER VISITS
NORWAY

REFS: (A) OSLO 1580 (B) USNATO 1902 (C) LISBON 2501
(D) STATE 070842

1. INTRODUCTION. PRIME MINISTER MARIO SOARES ACCOMPANIED BY
FOREIGN MINISTER JOSE MEIDEROS FERREIRA MADE AN OFFICIAL VISIT TO
NORWAY MARCH 27-30. CONVERSATIONS WERE HELD WITH HIGHEST
NORWEGIAN OFFICIALS INCLUDING PRIME MINISTER, FOREIGN MINISTER,
FINANCE MINISTER, DEFENSE MINISTER AND THEIR KEY STAFF MEMBERS
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AS WELL AS MEMBERS OF THE RULING LABOR PARTY.

2. MAJOR TOPICS DISCUSSED WERE EFTA, EC, CONSORTIUM AID,
ANGOLA, NATO AND MILITARY ASSISTANCE.

3. ECONOMIC ISSUES. ACCORDING MFA OFFICIAL, SOARES DISCUSSED
PORTUGAL'S ECONOMIC NEEDS WITH GON LEADERSHIP, EXPRESSED

APPRECIATION FOR NORWAY'S ASSISTANCE TO DATE, FOR GON'S SUPPORT WITH EFTA, FOR U.S. INITIATIVE IN CONSORTIUM AND NORWAY'S PARTICIPATION THEREIN. OSLO NEWSPAPERS REPORTED THE TOTAL AMOUNT BEING CONSIDERED FOR CONSORTIUM AID WAS \$1.5 BILLION. DURING DISCUSSIONS ON THE CONSORTIUM NORWEGIANS EXPRESSED HOPE TO SOARES THAT MONEY WOULD BE USED FOR DEVELOPMENTAL AS WELL AS BALANCE OF PAYMENTS PURPOSES. PRIME MINISTER ALSO COMMENTED THAT PORTUGAL WAS OPTIMISTIC ABOUT CHANCES FOR EC MEMBERSHIP. NOTE: AS ALL DIRECT PARTICIPANTS IN CONSORTIUM DISCUSSIONS ARE ON EASTER VACATION, WE WILL FOLLOW UP WITH THEM UPON RETURN.

4. WE WERE ALSO TOLD THAT IN A PRIVATE SESSION SOARES SURPRISED KEY LABOR PARTY OFFICIALS WITH A CALM BUT FIRM STATEMENT ABOUT HIS CONCERNS, WHICH HE URGED THEM TO SHARE, OVER WHAT SOARES DESCRIBED AS NON-DEMOCRATIC TRENDS IN ANGOLA AND MOZAMBIQUE. (THE LATTER IS A NORWEGIAN AID RECIPIENT).

5. MILITARY/SECURITY ISSUES. POSSIBLE NORWEGIAN ASSISTANCE IN REFIT OF PORTUGUESE DESTROYERS WAS RAISED (AND REPORTED REF A). GON GROUND FORCE SUPPORT ALSO DISCUSSED ALONG LINES PRESENTED AT RECENT MEETING OF NATO AD HOC GROUP (REPORTED REF B).

6. AT HIS PRESS CONFERENCE, SOARES SAID HE WOULD WELCOME SPAIN AS A NATO MEMBER IF "DEMOCRACY GETS A FOOT HOLD IN THE COUNTRY." HE ALSO EXPRESSED TOTAL AGREEMENT WITH HIS HOST'S VIEW OF NEED FOR STRONG ALLIANCE AND ITS CONTINUING IMPORTANCE FOR MAINTENANCE OF WESTERN SECURITY PARTICULARLY IN VIEW OF WARSAW PACT BUILDUP.

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7. OTHER TOPICS. SOARES STATED AT PRESS CONFERENCE THAT THERE WERE NO MORE POLITICAL PRISONERS IN PORTUGAL AND THAT THERE IS "FREEDOM FOR ALL FROM MAJOR CARVALHO TO GENERAL SPINOLA." PRIME MINISTER ALSO SAID THAT PORTUGAL DOES NOT MIX IN INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF ANGOLA AND IS OPPOSED TO INTERVENTION BY OTHERS.

8. COMMENT: SOARES VISIT RELATIVELY LOW KEY AND RECEIVED MODERATE PRESS ATTENTION. MAJOR ISSUES SUCH AS ECONOMIC AND MILITARY ASSISTANCE HAVE BEEN SUBJECT OF GON/GOP DISCUSSION OVER PAST YEAR EITHER BILATERALLY SUCH AS DURING FINANCE MINISTER KLEPPE'S VISIT TO LISBON LAST FALL OR AT NATO. THEREFORE, SOARES VISIT CENTERPIECE OF CONTINUING DIALOGUE AND WAS NOT EXPECTED TO MARK NEW INITIATIVES OR TO CONCLUDE OLD ONES. AS A SENIOR FONMIN REPRESENTATIVE SAID, GON DID A LOT OF LISTENING AND WITH SINCERE INTEREST.

9. SOARES' PRESENCE COULD NOT HELP BUT DIRECT ATTENTION TO SPAIN, WHICH IT DID. LEADING CONSERVATIVE OSLO NEWSPAPER

AFTENPOSTEN EDITORIALIZED THAT "IT IS REGRETTABLE THAT THE NORWEGIAN GOVERNMENT DOES NOT SEEM WILLING TO OFFER THE SAME SYMPATHY AND ENCOURAGEMENT TO THE NON-SOCIALIST FORCES IN SPAIN, FOR ADOLFO SUAREZ IS JUST AS MUCH IN NEED OF STATEMENTS OF SUPPORT AS MARIO SOARES WAS AT ONE TIME."

10. ALL IN ALL SOARES' THREE DAYS, WERE VALUABLE IN GIVING RECOGNITION AND CONTINUED LIFT TO NORWAY'S SUPPORT FOR ASSISTANCE TO PORTUGAL. THE VISIT ALSO STIMULATED USEFUL PUBLIC ATTENTION TO SOUTHERN EUROPEAN PROBLEMS WHICH INSULAR NORWEGIANS FREQUENTLY TEND TO OVERLOOK.
ANDERS

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Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
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Disposition History: n/a
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